

December 2013

Representative Tom Petri News from Congress



Greetings,

As we look forward to 2014, there are many big issues that Congress will be considering to improve job growth and reduce the nation's debt. Congress will also continue to fulfill its oversight role over executive branch agencies and actions, including the implementation of Obamacare. On top of that, there are several major reauthorizations—such as the Higher Education Act and the surface transportation bill—that I will be working closely on with my fellow committee members to craft and pass.

My offices in Washington, D.C., Fond du Lac, and Oshkosh are always open to assist you. You can also always use my website to see the latest news, sign up for my e-newsletter to receive regular updates, and contact me by email.

It's an honor to represent you in Washington. I wish everyone the best as we ring in a new year!

Spotlight on Petri-Sponsored Legislation

▲ **Student Loan Bill:** Progress is being made to advance my bipartisan student loan bill that would simplify federal student loan repayment by moving to universal income-based repayment. Under this system, a borrower pays a percentage of what he or she makes until the loan is repaid, ensuring that a student always has affordable loan payments. The House Education Committee has held several hearings on how to improve our current system, and many agree that income-based repayment is a step in the right direction. Visit petri.house.gov/studentloans for more information.

▲ **TEACH Act:** Colleges and universities across the country are using a wide array of new technologies and instructional materials in the classroom. This is a positive development. But at the same time, these new and innovative tools can also pose a challenge for accessibility. On November 15, I introduced the Technology, Equality, and Accessibility in College and Higher Education (TEACH) Act to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to the benefits of electronic instructional materials used in today's colleges and universities.

▲ **CIVIC Act:** Today's elections are becoming increasingly more expensive. The average winning congressional candidate spent \$1.5 million in 2012. Most agree that the best way to finance a campaign is through a broad base of donors—not large special interests. To encourage more small donors in campaigns I reintroduced the Citizens Involvement in Campaigns (CIVIC) Act that would offer a tax credit up to \$200 or a deduction up to \$600 for individuals who contribute to candidates for federal office.

Issues in Focus

Budget: The 16-day government shutdown ended on October 16 when President Obama signed a deal to keep the government funded through January 15 and extend borrowing authority through February 7. The shutdown started as a showdown over Obamacare, but developed into a broader discussion about how to reduce our deficits and pay off our debt. While I never supported a government shutdown as a way to resolve these issues, I was even more disappointed in the final result. After 16 days of uncertainty, furloughs, closures, and delays, the deal that ended the shutdown provided no significant progress in addressing our spending problems and budget issues. The American people deserve better. That is why I voted against the final deal. I am glad we avoided defaulting on our debt and the government reopened, but the October agreement didn't resolve any issues and we will be facing the exact same spending and debt limit questions after the holidays. I would like to see a renewed focus towards fiscal responsibility to lessen the debt burden for future generations.

Obamacare: The rollout of the Obamacare exchanges has not gone well. Fewer than expected have signed up for insurance on the exchanges; reports highlight "limitless security risks" with individuals' personal information; and, perhaps most upsetting, is the reality that millions of American individuals and families will not be able to keep their insurance plan. President Obama acknowledged his "broken promise" and has attempted to make changes to improve the situation, but problems continue. The House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to ensure Americans who like their insurance can keep it, but it has stalled in the Senate. House and Senate committees continue to hold oversight hearings to fully understand the extent of the situation, determine where fault lies, and whether changes need to be made to the law.

Farm Bill: Conferees have been appointed by both the House and Senate to meet and iron out details for a long-term Farm Bill—something desperately needed by America's farmers. The Farm Bill also includes many low-income benefits, such as SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), in addition to farm-related programs. There are many ways to reduce waste and abuse in farm and low-income benefits programs while still leaving in place a safety net for farmers and low-income families who truly need assistance. For instance, Congressman Kind and I introduced legislation to reform the crop insurance program and save taxpayer dollars.



On May 31,
Congressman Petri
joined Sheboygan
County officials to
break ground on a
rails-to-trails project

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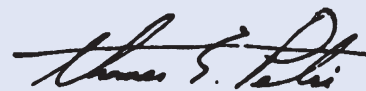
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Official Business

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Update from Chairman Petri on the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

The Highways and Transit Subcommittee has spent much of the year holding hearings and gathering information about the implementation of last year's surface transportation law, which expires on September 30, 2014. My subcommittee has heard from numerous Dept. of Transportation officials, transportation specialists, and advocates about the law, and other laws that affect ground transport of people, goods, and services. Recently, the subcommittee held a hearing on the future of driverless car technology, which some say could be sold commercially in less than ten years. We hope to move a transportation bill through the House by the summer.

Medal of Honor Proposed for Fond du Lac Native James Megellas

At the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, James Megellas single-handedly destroyed a Nazi tank that threatened his unit's mission and the lives of his fellow soldiers. He went on to lead his troops into Herresbach, Belgium, liberating the town without sustaining one casualty. His actions earned him a recommendation for the Medal of Honor, but regrettably the Army downgraded it to a Silver Star with no mention of his attack on the tank in the award citation. Earlier this year I introduced legislation to ask that the Army revisit Megellas's case. In November, I joined Senator John Cornyn (TX) in sending a letter to Secretary of the Army John McHugh to ask that he personally ensure Megellas' case receives fair reconsideration.



On November 20, Congressman Petri and Port Washington Mayor Tom Mlada met with the Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C. to discuss the need for funding to repair the breakwaters at the city harbor

Save the Date! *Please come join me at one of my upcoming Town Meetings and express your opinions*

Saturday, January 18th

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.—SHEBOYGAN
Mead Public Library, 710 North 8th Street
Rocca Meeting Room

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.—MEQUON

Frank L. Weyenberg Library
11345 N. Cedarburg Rd
Tolzman Community Room

Sunday, January 19th

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.—RIPON

Ripon Public Library, 120 Jefferson Street
Silver Creek Room

Monday, January 20th

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.—TWO RIVERS

City Hall, 1717 East Park Street
City Council Chambers

Tuesday, January 21st

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.—SAUKVILLE

Municipal Center
639 East Green Bay Avenue
Village Board Room

Wednesday, January 22nd

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.—REDGRANITE

Municipal Building, 161 Dearborn Street

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.—OSHKOSH

City Hall, 215 Church Avenue
Room 406

Thursday, January 23rd

11:00 a.m. – Noon—MAYVILLE

City Hall, 15 South School Street
City Council Chambers

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.—COLUMBUS

Columbus Public Library
223 West James Street
Meeting Room

Friday, January 24th

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.—WISCONSIN DELLS

Kilbourn Public Library
620 Elm Street
Community Center Room

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.—MONTELLO

Marquette County Service Center
480 Underwood Avenue
Demonstration Room

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.—GREEN LAKE

Green Lake County Government Center
571 County Road A
County Board Room